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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to assist individuals involved in the development, administration, and delivery of volunteer-based community adult literacy programs. Addressed in the individual sections of the guide are the following topics: community (community assessment, learner population, program purposes, public awareness, and partnerships and networking); adult learners (recruitment, initial interviews and assessment, use of assessment data, and linking adult learners to additional resources); staff resources (determination of staffing needs, staff recruitment, staff development and evaluation); instruction and support (instructional strategies and materials, adult learner support, and quality assurance); governance (accountability, legal issues, planning, and role of adult learners and staff); management (staff, financial, office, and records management and reporting); and evaluation (program and student evaluation). Appendixes to the guide contain checklists providing guidelines for collection and maintaining descriptive and performance data as well as a list of resources dealing with adult literacy and literacy programs. (MN)

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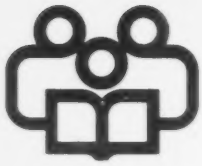

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

Prepared by

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Produced under the auspices of

B. Dalton Bookseller
National Literacy Initiative

With the collaboration of

The B. Dalton Bookseller
Literacy Effectiveness Project

Task Force
Response Group
Evaluation Group

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of the literacy movement in the United States must be the effectiveness and quality of the services we provide. The dramatic problem of adult illiteracy and the need for additional literacy services is now discussed in neighborhood meetings and the White House, in national publications and local newsletters.

Present attention focuses on the number of adult illiterates, the number of programs, the number of people in those programs, and the number of volunteers. But numbers are not enough. We need to ask whether the programs are effective in reaching those people needing services, whether the programs are responsive to the specific needs of adult learners, whether those learners are actually learning, and whether volunteer and paid staff are receiving the training and support they need.

The "Guidelines For Effective Adult Literacy Programs" is intended to provide guidance to good programming. It is a collection of statements that reflect the field's best judgment on what a literacy program should do to be effective. It does not provide step-by-step instructions on how to run a literacy program; instead, it describes the ingredients of a successful program.

B. Dalton Bookseller has made a four-year commitment to adult literacy — a commitment of money, consultation and in-kind resources. There are five goals to the adult literacy initiative:

1. Increase the number of people receiving services through local and state community-based volunteer programs funded by B. Dalton from 30,000 to 100,000 by 1986.
2. Increase the number of volunteers working in adult literacy programs funded by B. Dalton from 16,000 to 50,000 to work with 100,000 needing help by 1986.
3. Increase the effectiveness of community-based volunteer literacy programs resulting in 70 percent of people served by B. Dalton-funded community-based volunteer programs meeting their functional literacy goals by 1986.
4. Ensure there are services available for functionally illiterate adults in B. Dalton market communities.
5. Identify and support national communication networks to disseminate information gained through B. Dalton's adult literacy program to increase the effectiveness of literacy providers, replicate model programs in other communities, and increase the number of people receiving literacy services.

Through my work with local, state and national literacy programs in the United States, I have observed that we need to stand back from day-to-day operations and examine the overall picture of literacy programming. The third goal of B. Dalton's initiative, to increase program effectiveness, is the key to the success of the other four. B. Dalton's major commitment of money will impact the problem; just increasing the numbers, however, is not enough. Unless community literacy programs are effective, the problem will remain.

The most important place for that examination of program effectiveness to happen is at the local level. That is for whom these Guidelines are intended.

In order for guidelines to represent the best in literacy programming, and for them to be useful in the field, it was necessary to provide an opportunity for programs to discuss and come to consensus on the ingredients of effective literacy programs. These Guidelines were developed through a process of field involvement and input:

1. A Task Force was formed, consisting of 10 field representatives, to give input and direction on the content and format of the Guidelines. They met together on two occasions, resulting in the first and third drafts of the Guidelines.

2. A Response Group, consisting of 20 service providers, responded to and suggested improvements in the drafts sent them, resulting in the second and fourth drafts of the Guidelines. They contributed their comments and material through the mail, following the two meetings of the Task Force.

3. In between the two Task Force meetings, an Evaluation Group met to provide information from research and evaluation efforts already conducted or underway that can contribute to literacy programs' efforts to measure adult learners' progress in several different goal areas.

The Acknowledgments name all the participants in the Task Force, Response Group, and Evaluation Group.

Rainbow Research, a non-profit agency that provided the project with expertise in the areas of evaluation, policy design, and organizational effectiveness, compiled the information and perspectives from the several meetings and mailings of the three groups, and developed each of the four drafts and this final document.

The Guidelines are based on several assumptions. They are directed to literacy programs for adults rather than for children. "Literacy" is defined in a broad context of skills needed to function adequately in one's life. Volunteers are recognized as a valuable resource in literacy programming. There are shared principles of effectiveness whether a program is part of a public institution or a nonprofit organization; or whether it provides classroom, small group or one-to-one learning opportunities; whether it operates primarily with paid staff or with volunteers.

The Guidelines are a tool, not a mandate. We intend that the primary audience for these Guidelines are those involved with local literacy programs who can commit the time and energy to address the effectiveness and quality of their programs: managers, coordinators, executive directors, board members, instructors, trainers, and adult learners.

Several national and state organizations or institutions provide training and assistance to local literacy efforts. It is our hope that these guidelines can also be used by them as a vehicle for assessing programs, and for contracting with local programs for training and assistance. The Guidelines can provide a focus in improving quality and a means of communication among those interested in promoting it.

The development of the Guidelines is a result of the commitment and work of many people. I want to thank B. Dalton's Corporate Responsibility Committee for having the understanding and support for this project; the Response Group, the Evaluation Group and particularly the Task Force members, for their knowledge and time put into providing the content and responding to the many drafts; and Steven Mayer from Rainbow Research for the nearly impossible task of taking information, comments, responses, criticism, recommendations and more information in the writing, formation, and final preparation of the Guidelines.

But ultimately, of course, the success and impact of the Guidelines depends on you.

Good luck,

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October 1984

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

In launching this project, we reviewed several different versions of "guidelines" that have been prepared for fields other than literacy.

They differ considerably. In some fields they represent "standards" that have the force of law; in others they are merely suggestions. Some come in the form of "how-to-do-it workbooks" that guide the program through development, and others look like "handbooks" that contain lists of resources. Some offer detailed explanations of why, and others suggest how. These each have their advantages, and disadvantages.

For this project, we pursued two objectives. First, we wanted to avoid forcing all programs into a single mold; different programs can achieve excellent results even by pursuing a different course of action. Second, we wanted to compile and summarize the collective wisdom of the literacy field; while programs may look different, there are underlying themes that guide them to "effective literacy programs."

What do we mean by "effective"? An effective program is one that best supports its adult learners in attaining literacy skills. Each of the chapters presents guidelines for strengthening key functions of a literacy program, so that they can become more effective.

And what, then, do we mean by "guidelines"? Guidelines "point the way" to a valued goal, such as effectiveness. A guideline statement expresses a basic principle that can be used to help a program move along the path to greater effectiveness.

There are a few basic themes that underlie all the guidelines prepared for this document.

First, these guidelines are written especially for adult literacy programs.

Second, the support of adult learners in pursuit of their literacy goals is the primary concern of a literacy program. While issues of program management are discussed, it is only in the context of how it supports the primary concern of the program.

Third, we stressed a principle of consistency, in which all phases of program operations, from recruiting learners to choosing instructional materials to staffing the program to evaluating learner progress all be done in a way that is consistent with each other, and with the mission and philosophy of the program.

Fourth, we deliberately omitted many guidelines concerning program management that are common to non-profit programs, not just literacy programs. Rather than go over the same ground covered by handbooks on non-profit management, we refer the reader to the extensive resource list included as Appendix B.

The Guidelines are structured as follows:

There are seven chapters, each focusing on a key component of a literacy program. Each chapter has a number of sections. An outline of each chapter is printed on the tabbed divider.

The guideline statements themselves are printed in bold typeface, and are written as "should-statements." Indented under each guideline is one or more statements of explanation, definition, or direction that supports the guideline statement.

At the end of each chapter is a Program Assessment Checklist that can be used to "take stock" of the program, and to plan for needed improvements.

Then, there are two appendices. Appendix A presents a "recommended set of records" for adult literacy programs. Appendix B is a compilation of resources that can be of help to both new and developed programs.

How can these Guidelines be used best? We suggest the following, and encourage you to develop others to suit your particular program and situation.

COMPLETE THE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST AT THE END OF EACH CHAPTER. These can be done by individuals or as a group. Each checklist item is related to one of the guidelines in the chapter, so that the guideline can be consulted for guidance or suggestions as to how to proceed.

DISCUSS GUIDELINES AT STAFF MEETINGS. Any one chapter, or even any one guideline, would be a good topic of discussion. How well is the program doing? What needs attention? In which areas should the program put its priorities in making improvements during this next month?

DETERMINE STAFF/BOARD CONSENSUS ON NEEDED DIRECTIONS. Use the Program Assessment Checklists to see where there is disagreement. See where everyone agrees that there's work to be done.

USE THEM FOR BOARD EDUCATION. The Board should become familiar with all the aspects of effective programming. They'll be better able to appreciate the operations of the program, better able to ask informed questions, and better able to advocate their program to others.

USE THEM TO GUIDE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. New programs will certainly have much more to do than more established programs. While no new program is expected to have all the guidelines in place when it opens its doors, certain guidelines should stand out as necessary for beginning operations.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT NEW OR STRONGER PARTS OF THE PROGRAM. Few adult literacy programs are presently "at full strength" in all areas. The Guidelines can steer the program to those parts that are presently neglected, and can guide it to an effective solution by suggesting the important things to consider.

USE THEM TO ASK FOR ASSISTANCE. Once the program has identified areas needing improvement, it should decide whether these improvements can be made entirely with internal resources, or whether outside assistance would also be helpful. Individual guidelines can be the focus of help from consultants or other resources.

USE THEM TO DESIGN A PROGRAM OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR STAFF AND BOARD. Often, the needed improvements can be assisted or facilitated by in-service training provided by appropriate community resources.

SHOW THEM TO FUNDERS. Funders like to be assured that there are standards or guidelines for effective programming in the areas that they support. They also like to be assured that programs are making efforts to aspire to greater effectiveness.

QUOTE THEM IN GRANT REQUESTS. The case for financial support can be bolstered by citing appropriate guidelines, either those that the program is already particularly strong in, or those that the program is wanting support in order to improve.

USE THEM TO CONDUCT AN ANNUAL REVIEW. Each of the guidelines should be the subject of an annual program review, as suggested in Chapter 7.

We would like to hear about your experiences in using these Guidelines, and how they have helped to improve program effectiveness. Please call or write me at the address below.

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October 1984

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY

Understand and Address Community Issues

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

- Resource Assessment
- Community Conditions
- Key Viewpoints
- Documentation

LEARNER POPULATION

- Learner Population
- Current Understanding

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

- Definitions
- Literacy
- Mission
- Philosophy
- Expected Learner Results
- Expected Community Results
- Building Blocks

PUBLIC AWARENESS

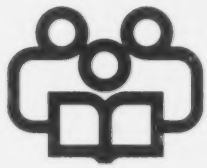
- Advocacy
- Awareness
- Awareness Campaigns

NETWORKING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

- Networking
- Partnerships
- Compatible Partnerships
- Community Advocacy

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY

Understand and Address Community Issues



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT **Before a literacy program is started, planners should undertake a thorough assessment of the resources and needs of the geographic community they intend to serve.**

An understanding of the broader community helps planners design a more meaningful and attractive program for the learners.

An established literacy program should ensure its understanding of community needs and strengths stays up-to-date.

COMMUNITY CONDITIONS **The community assessment should seek to discover the economic, social, political, and technological conditions of the community related to the problems of illiteracy and their solution. The assessment should seek to identify:**

The literacy skills that are needed and wanted, and by whom;

The gaps existing in the community's ability to provide those skills, including mechanisms for people to find and access appropriate resources;

The sources for locating willing adult learners and instructors, and other resource people needed to support the chosen mission of the program;

The availability and desirability of different instructional approaches and materials, different program missions and philosophies, and different organizational structures and styles of administration;

Opportunities for supporting and building on others' efforts and resources in the areas of instruction, as well as other pro-literacy activities such as public awareness, research, resource development, and political action.

KEY VIEWPOINTS **Program planners should conduct discussions with the key "constituents" of a literacy program, and consider their views and experience in the assessment.**

The constituents of a literacy program include people with literacy problems and their advocates, representatives of other programs working on related issues, people in touch with other people with literacy problems, possible sponsors and supporters, and possible instructors.

DOCUMENTATION **The assessment should conclude with a written report documenting its findings.**

Obtaining letters of support from key people, plus "hard facts and figures", will help to secure community support for the program.

Obtain facts and figures about the extent of the illiteracy problem from state and national literacy organizations.

Present the information discovered in the assessment, as suggested in the Community Conditions section, in the report.

LEARNER POPULATION

LEARNER POPULATION **A literacy program should identify its "learner population," those segments of the community it wants to support directly with literacy instruction.**

"Identify segments of the community" in terms of age groups, education groups, geography, ethnic groups, skill-level groups, specific needs, or combinations of the above.

An example of a learner population would be "out-of-school youth and adults in need of basic skills in writing, reading, and speaking." Another is "low-income adults wanting literacy skills sufficient to gain employment." Another is "residents of the Phillips and Whittier neighborhoods."

Make sure the identified learner population is consistent with the findings of the community assessment.

The program cannot support everyone, or "be all things to all people." Instead, it should be realistic, and clearly identify the populations with whom it will work directly, and those that it will link with other resources.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING **The program should strive to keep current in its understanding of the qualities and needs of its learner population.**

Good instruction depends on the instructors' familiarity with the special qualities of the learner population, as individuals and as a group — the barriers that prevent greater participation in society, the values that support their participation in the program, and the different ways that improved literacy skills would help to remove those barriers.

The program's learners will also want to learn more about their community, and learning materials can be developed for that purpose.

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

DEFINITIONS **A literacy program should have a working definition of literacy, along with written statements of its mission, philosophy, and expected results for its learners and for the overall community.**

Taken together, these definitions make up the program's "Statements of Purpose." Be sure these are consistent with the findings of the community assessment.

LITERACY **A literacy program should adopt a working definition of literacy.**

One example is "the ability to use the basic skills of reading, speaking, writing, and computation to function in today's society."

MISSION **A literacy program should have a written "mission," which refers to its overall purposes in support of its learners. An example:**

"The purpose of this literacy program is to enable adult native speakers of English to acquire necessary basic skills in reading, speaking, and writing, so that they may be able to participate more fully in society."

PHILOSOPHY **A literacy program should have a written statement of its "philosophy." The statement should include what the learner population needs or wants (based on the community assessment), how they learn, and how that learning is best facilitated by the program. Two examples:**

"This program believes that the adults of our learner population wants to learn basic literacy skills, that they can learn them best by being tutored one-to-one using the principles of adult education, a curriculum based on phonics, and materials drawn from the literacy problems students face in their everyday lives."

"This program believes that the adults of our learner population wants to be empowered to take more control over their lives, and that this can happen best by engaging them as partners in the learning process and consulting them at all times in the selection of instructional materials, so that they can lean in a way that best suits their definition of their own needs."

EXPECTED LEARNER RESULTS **A literacy program should have a written statement of "expected learner results," which refers to the kind of outcomes you want "successful" adult learners to experience. Two examples of expected learner results are:**

"This program intends to enable its adult learners to attain their personal literacy goals, and to increase their self-confidence so that they become active, self-motivated learners."

"This program intends to enable its adult learners to improve their reading comprehension skills, so that they may then also improve their economic condition."

EXPECTED COMMUNITY RESULTS **A literacy program should have a written statement of "expected community results," which refers to results the program wants the community or more specific constituent groups such as volunteers and other agencies, to experience. Two examples of expected community results are:**

"This program intends to increase the level of awareness of the illiteracy problem among other community-based programs, and human service agencies so that referrals and coordination among agencies can increase."

"This program intends to increase the level of awareness of the literacy problem among the business community, the public at large, and elected representatives, so that private and public support for and involvement in adult literacy can be increased."

BUILDING BLOCKS **The statements of mission, philosophy, and expected result should be the framework to build the programs of instruction and administration.**

The way instruction happens, and the way the program is run, provide the opportunities to implement the philosophy of the program.

Expect these statements to change over time as the program develops its own "personality," as community and population needs change, and as the program learns what it can and cannot realistically do.

Publicize the statements of mission, philosophy, and expected results should be in program brochures, program descriptions, and grant applications.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

ADVOCACY **A literacy program should be vocal in its support of literacy in the community.**

Program participants (learners, staff, board) can be active in community meetings, service club meetings, city and county hearings, and in visits to the offices of elected officials.

AWARENESS **A literacy program should help the community to understand the need for everyone to have literacy skills.**

The public needs to know about the literacy problem, what is being done, and how it can be supportive.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS **The program can join with other agencies, service and social clubs, businesses and unions, and educational institutions in a campaign to educate the community about the problem of illiteracy and opportunities for addressing it.**

Use awareness campaigns to showcase the accomplishments of the program and to promote solutions to problems of illiteracy.

Be sure the program uses documented facts, avoid sensationalism, and uses or adapts materials from national literacy organizations.

Plan awareness campaigns carefully. A poorly-planned campaign can backfire, create false hope, and cause bad feelings — just the opposite of what's intended.

NETWORKING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

NETWORKING **A literacy program should be in communication with other efforts to address issues of illiteracy.**

Be aware of other local literacy efforts in your own community and elsewhere, and of state and national literacy efforts that could effect your own.

PARTNERSHIPS **A literacy program should enter into partnerships with other organizations to enhance common goals.**

Partnerships with other literacy organizations help to educate the community about literacy issues, improve the appropriateness of referrals between programs, share instructional techniques, make better use of resources, and advocate needed additional resources.

Partnerships with non-literacy organizations help to educate the community about the broader issues underlying illiteracy, broaden the referral network, and create a broader base for addressing the full range of adult learner issues.

COMPATIBLE PARTNERSHIPS **A literacy program should develop the type of partnership that will be mutually supportive and best enhance the partnership's goals.**

Be familiar with each others' goals and focus on mutual purposes and adult learners' needs, and avoid harmful politics and turf struggles.

Develop clear statements of agreement that specify goals and the roles and responsibilities of each party.

A partnership can be coordinated, in which the parties share information about strategy but act independently. It can be cooperative, in which the parties share information and act together. Or it can be a coalition, in which the parties join forces and act as one.

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY **A literacy program should join with others in mobilizing the community in support of public policy and specific services that address the full range of adult learner issues.**

The inability to read is interrelated with a number of social conditions that are addressed by a variety of social action and human service organizations. Entering into partnership with them contributes to a social movement to alleviate those conditions.

Facilitate adult learners' development by providing services directly, or by referring them to other organizations' services that can be also be helpful.

Services that complement the literacy program's own include: acquisition and circulation of appropriate reading materials through public libraries and bookstores, child care, transportation, free telephone directory assistance and emergency response, employment development, job training, health care, and legal assistance.

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Does the program operate on the basis of a community assessment? (See **RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**)

2 Yes No Can the program make a good case for its existence in the community? (See **COMMUNITY CONDITIONS**)

3 Yes No Are there any key program constituents whose perspectives were left out or ignored in the community assessment? (See **KEY VIEWPOINTS**)

4 Yes No Does the program keep its "facts and figures" about community literacy problems in a file that can be used in making presentations? (See **DOCUMENTATION**)

5 Yes No Do the program's client records show that the program is working with the same learner population described in the mission statement? (See **LEARNER POPULATION**)

6 Yes No Does the program have written statements of what it means by literacy, the program's mission, philosophy, and the results it expects for learners in the program and for the overall community? (See **DEFINITIONS**)

7 Yes No Will the program's approach to instruction produce the kind of results it hopes for its adult learners? (See **BUILDING BLOCKS**)

8 Yes No Does the program ever make presentations in the community to help it understand the need for everyone to have literacy skills? (See **AWARENESS**)

9 Yes No Does the program have a well-prepared presentation of the problems of illiteracy and opportunities for addressing them that it uses in the community? (See **AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS**)

10 Yes No Does the program take every opportunity to support the creation of public policy and community resources that will assist adult learners? (See **COMMUNITY ADVOCACY**)

11 In what ways do program participants (learners, instructors, staff) learn more about the issues facing adults with literacy problems? (See **CURRENT UNDERSTANDING**)

_____

_____

_____

12 What is the program's definition of "literacy?" (See **LITERACY**)

_____

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13 What is the program's "mission?" (See **MISSION**)

14 What is the program's "philosophy?" (See **PHILOSOPHY**)

15 What results does the program hope its learners will experience? (See **EXPECTED LEARNER RESULTS**)

16 What results does the program hope its larger community will experience? (See **EXPECTED COMMUNITY RESULTS**)

17 What does the program do to keep in touch with other literacy efforts? (See **NETWORKING**)

18 With what other literacy and non-literacy resources has the program entered into partnerships? (See **PARTNERSHIPS**)

19 List the opportunities the program's taken in the last year to be vocal in its support of literacy in the community? (See **COMMUNITY ADVOCACY**)

CHAPTER 2: ADULT LEARNERS

Recruit, Assess, and Link Adult Learners to Resources

RECRUITING ADULT LEARNERS

- Strategies
- Community Involvement
- Program Capacity

THE INITIAL INTERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

- Personal Interview
- Rapport
- Learner Involvement
- Initial Assessment

USING THE ASSESSMENT

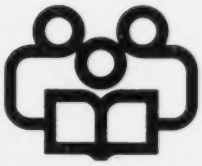
- Assessment Results
- Assessment Records
- Providing Feedback
- Database

LINKING ADULT LEARNERS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Resource File
- Community Resources
- Literacy Resources
- Special Learning Needs
- Linking

CHAPTER 2: ADULT LEARNERS

Recruit, Assess, and Link Adult Learners to Resources



RECRUITING ADULT LEARNERS

STRATEGIES **A literacy program should develop strategies for recruiting potential adult learners from its learner population. Possible strategies include:**

Give personal presentations to groups that include large numbers of potential adult learners.

Ask present students to recruit their friends.

Place posters in laundromats, community centers, common rooms in housing projects, government center offices, and buses.

Use the media. Develop public service announcements (PSA's) for broadcast on radio and television.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT **Recruitment should involve all relevant segments of the community, not just the learner population.**

Give special attention to people who provide access to large numbers of adult learners. These would include employment counselors, school counselors, welfare counselors, community outreach workers, etc.

Distribute written material, such as program brochures and posters, to community organizations and churches. Realize that the real audience for the brochure is people who know potential adult learners as well as the learner candidates themselves.

Publicize your program so it comes to the attention of the learner population as well as to those people with access to adult learner candidates. The more people are aware of the program, the more they themselves can serve as recruiters.

PROGRAM CAPACITY **A literacy program should actively recruit potential students only if it is capable of responding to the recruits.**

Keeping a lengthy waiting list is demoralizing to those who have to wait a long time to begin. Those in charge of recruiting, other public relations activities, and awareness campaigns should be mindful of the program's capacity to respond.

THE INITIAL INTERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

PERSONAL INTERVIEW **A skilled interviewer should interview potential adult learners in person to discover if the program is appropriate for them, and to record basic information about each person.**

Make clear the program's purposes and instructional approaches to potential adult learners. This will enable them to make a more informed choice and commitment.

Show the potential learners examples of the program's learning materials to give them realistic expectations and to generate enthusiasm.

If it is apparent during this interview, or later during the assessment, that the adult learner might be better off in a different sort of program, make that referral.

RAPPORT **The initial interview should be designed to establish rapport with adult learners.**

Be sensitive to the learner's living circumstances, culture and values, and previous educational experiences during the initial interview (and all later transactions with the adult learner as well).

The initial interview is a good opportunity to collect and record some basic data about the potential learner (see Appendix A for suggestions).

Share positive feedback with the adult learner during the initial interview, as well as areas that will need work.

LEARNER INVOLVEMENT **A literacy program should assist the adult learner in assessing his/her needs and expectations and in establishing learning goals.**

Conduct this assessment as part of, or immediately after, the initial interview, or as part of a later session.

Listen carefully to the adult learner's needs and involve him/her in establishing learning goals and objectives.

Establish realistic learning goals for the adult learner that are consistent with the program's instructional capabilities.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT **Before a program of instruction is established for a given learner, a literacy program should conduct an assessment in each area mentioned in the "expected learner results" portion of the program's Statements of Purpose.**

For example, if the program intends to improve the learner's reading comprehension, an initial assessment of the learner's reading comprehension should be made. This assessment serves as a baseline to measure later change.

If the program intends to help adult learners meet their individually-chosen goals (such as reading job manuals, children's books, cook books, or maps), the instructor has to know what those goals are, so that later assessments can focus on them.

Assessments should be conducted with special sensitivity to the fears that adult learners may have about testing, and to the inadequacies of many tests and testing procedures.

USING THE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT RESULTS **A literacy program should use the results of the initial interview and assessment for two basic purposes:**

First, it serves as the basis for choosing the most appropriate instructor and materials for the learner.

Second, it serves to document what the learner already knows, and serves as a "baseline" to be used for measuring learner progress.

Third, it serves as one basis for providing feedback to adult learners on their opportunities for further learning and progress.

ASSESSMENT RECORDS **A literacy program should create a file on each potential learner at the time of the initial interview, and should keep records of each adult learner's initial assessment, later assessments, and the learner's goals.**

Conducting assessments and keeping records are seldom the most gratifying aspects of literacy instruction. However, sharing information and providing knowledge of progress really is the core of all teaching, and learners need to see regular evidence of how they are doing.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK **At regular intervals, the program should assess the learner's progress in each of the relevant areas, and should share the results with the learner.**

Learners should see the results of their assessments to understand their progress and to re-focus their learning efforts.

An often-used rule-of-thumb is to conduct assessments after each 50 hours of instruction.

Make sure even small positive steps are apparent in the on-going discussion between learner and instructor, and in the records themselves. It is extremely important that adult learners be aware that they are making progress, and that they use that information to help shape their learning activities.

DATABASE **At least once a year, the program should review and compile its adult learner records and evaluate the overall progress of its learners.**

Learner records contain the basis for answering that difficult and frequently-asked question, "How do you know your program works?" Approaches to answering this are discussed in Chapter 7.

LINKING ADULT LEARNERS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCE FILE **A literacy program should have an active file of community resources to which adult learners might be referred for specific needs or opportunities.**

Whenever possible, obtain first-hand knowledge of the capabilities of the community resources to which learners are referred.

Design lessons about community resources for adult learners (and instructors). Maintain this file, familiarize staff with its contents, and make it part of the instructor's orientation package.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES **Program staff should refer adult learners to other community resources whenever certain needs can be addressed there.**

During the interview and initial assessment, be alert to both literacy and non-literacy needs and opportunities, and to the benefits to adult learners that might come from using additional community resources.

Referrals need not be an "either/or" situation. Adult learners can benefit from a literacy program and from a variety of other community resources as well.

LITERACY RESOURCES **If it is apparent that an adult learner would benefit from participating in a different literacy program, the program should refer the person there.**

Making referrals to other organizations, whether they focus on literacy or not, is an excellent way of demonstrating a cooperative approach to literacy programming.

SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS **If special learning needs are identified, a course of action, including referral to outside resources or to an internal resource person, should be prescribed.**

Give the learner several chances before making conclusions about weaknesses, and be supportive of learning efforts.

If ultimately it becomes apparent that additional resources are needed, negotiate a course of action with the adult learner.

LINKING **Program staff should encourage adult learners to use other community resources.**

Simply telling an adult learner about a resource may not be enough. Often, the adult learner appreciates support or help in using that resource. Staff or instructors could offer help by making appointment, phoning ahead, accompanying the student, etc.

When the adult learner has completed the literacy program, a referral to another type of learning program would be helpful.

Follow-up on the referral, with a phone call to the person or the resource, to determine its helpfulness.

CHAPTER 2: ADULT LEARNERS

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Does the program have and use a plan for recruiting potential adult learners? (See **STRATEGIES**)

2 Yes No Do recruited adult learners get discouraged from waiting too long before they can begin? (See **PROGRAM CAPACITY**)

3 Yes No Does the initial interview encourage potential learners to participate in the program? (See **RAPPORT**)

4 Yes No Is the assessment of the learner's needs and goals done in cooperation with the learner? (See **LEARNER INVOLVEMENT**)

5 Yes No Does the program use assessments as a basis for selecting an instructor and materials that support the goals of the learner? (See **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**)

6 Yes No Does the program keep systematic and current records on each of its adult learners? (See **ASSESSMENT RECORDS**)

7 Yes No Does the program assess the learners progress at regular intervals and share the results with the learner? (See **PROVIDING FEEDBACK**)

8 Yes No Do the learners' files contain the kind of information that allows for an annual review of the overall progress of its learners? (See **DATABASE**)

9 Yes No Does the program keep current a resource file that is used by instructors and learners? (See **RESOURCE FILE**)

10 Yes No Are there other types of literacy programs or opportunities available to which the program refers adult learners? (See **LITERACY RESOURCES**)

11 Yes No Does the program have the ability to identify special learning needs in its adult learners? (See **SPECIAL LEARNING**)

12 Who in the community hears about the literacy program as a result of its recruiting strategies? (See **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**)

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13 What demonstrates to a potential learner that the program is right for him/her? (See **PERSONAL INTERVIEW**)

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14 Describe how the learner's literacy goals and initial skills are assessed in each of the different "expected learner results" that the program hopes for its learners? (See **INITIAL ASSESSMENT**)

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15 How many potential learners or actual learners are referred to other community resources each year? (See **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**)

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16 In what ways are adult learners encouraged and supported in using other community resources? (See **LINKING**)

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CHAPTER 3: STAFF RESOURCES

Develop Good Instructors and Other Staff

DETERMINING STAFFING NEEDS

- Overall Needs
- Staffing Plan
- Racial/Ethnic Composition

RECRUITING STAFF

- Recruiting Instructors
- Recruiting Volunteers

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Orientation
- Pre-Service Training
- In-Service Training

STAFF EVALUATION

- Quality Assurance

CHAPTER 3: STAFF RESOURCES

Develop Good Instructors and Other Staff

DETERMINING STAFF NEEDS

OVERALL NEEDS A literacy program should determine its overall needs for instruction and non-instructional staff.

These needs can be met by paid staff, volunteer staff, or a combination of both. Ensure that the use of volunteers and paid staff is compatible with the program's mission and philosophy.

Base staffing needs on an analysis of how best to accomplish the mission of the program, considering also the program's financial resources and action plan.

STAFFING PLAN A literacy program should develop a specific staffing plan for accomplishing the mission of the program.

Specify in the plan how the program will make use of paid and/or volunteer staff in accomplishing the program's mission.

Base decisions on how to use volunteers and paid staff on the experience, skills, and time required to perform the tasks needed to meet the program's goals.

Develop written job descriptions for the staff director, paid and volunteer staff (both instructional and non-instructional).

RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION The program should continually strive to have the ethnic composition of the instructional staff reflect that of the learner population.

Give special attention to involving minority persons as instructors, and consider developing specially-located community satellite programs as one approach.

Adult learners could be more comfortable with the obvious presence of others of their ethnic group as instructors in the program, even if instructor-learner matches are made on other bases.

RECRUITING STAFF

RECRUITING INSTRUCTORS A literacy program should recruit instructors who meet program-established criteria and are able and willing to participate in pre-service and in-service training.

Define the characteristics and qualities you are seeking in instructional staff.

Instructors can be either paid or volunteer, consistent with the staffing plan and the philosophy of the program.

Instructors should be able and prepared to support the mission statement, philosophy, and values of the program, as well as the values of the learner population.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS **The program should develop and use a strategy for recruiting volunteers for instructional and non-instructional staff.**

Develop a special brochure or public service announcement designed to attract persons interested in instructing adults in literacy skills, assisting in that instruction, and performing non-instructional literacy program functions.

Be prepared to receive inquiries from potential learners as well as instructors with any special publicity on literacy programs, as well.

Maintain a list of potential sources of volunteers including community education programs, service organizations, businesses, churches, Volunteer Action Councils or Volunteer Bureaus, and continually recruit from it.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ORIENTATION **A literacy program should provide an orientation to potential instructional and non-instructional staff.**

The orientation allows potential staff to learn about the program's purposes, approaches, opportunities, and expectations of involvement. It allows potential staff to make an informed choice about whether to commit their time and energy to the program.

Expect instructors to sign a contract committing themselves to the program for a specified amount and length of time.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING **A literacy program should offer pre-service training to instructional and non-instructional staff that is suited to their skills and experience.**

Pre-service training for instructional staff includes training in the program's instructional approach, using the program's instructional materials, conducting and using learner assessments, making referrals to community resources, and fulfilling other program responsibilities as given in their job description.

Pre-service training for non-instructional staff includes training in fund development, public speaking, recruiting, program management, program support, and any other areas covered in job descriptions or the annual action plan (see Chapter 6).

In some programs the instructional and non-instructional staff may be the same people, or overlap, in which case adapt the training to what they need to know to do their work well.

Those responsible for pre-service training can develop their own materials and approach, use outside resource people, or use materials already developed by others for the purpose. The state's Literacy Council and national literacy organizations are major resources for training instructors, and for training trainers.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING **The program should offer in-service training to instructors and other staff that continually improves their effectiveness in working with the program's adult learners.**

On-going education is important for maintaining skills and morale, for exchange of ideas and resources among instructors, for problem solving, and for learning new skills.

Any of the topics included in these Guidelines would make suitable topics for in-service training: working with adult learners, how adults learn, issues facing the learner population, community resources, assessment skills, instructional approaches, design of instructional materials, and others.

Keep staff members up-to-date with developments in the literacy field by sending them to conferences and by encouraging them to read relevant books and journals (see Appendix B).

STAFF EVALUATION

QUALITY ASSURANCE **A literacy program should regularly evaluate its staff to ensure quality instruction, to support the staff with opportunities for recognition and further development, and to meet the needs of good program management.**

Include criteria for evaluating staff during pre-service or in-service training. Base evaluation on staffs' job description.

Ask people with different perspectives to contribute to the evaluation, including other staff, learners, peers, supervisor, and/or outside parties.

Make evaluation less threatening by offering staff with opportunities for additional in-service or outside training.

In extreme cases it may be necessary to remove or re-assign a staff person who consistently fails to measure up on his/her evaluations.

CHAPTER 3: STAFF RESOURCES

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Is someone in the program responsible for making sure that the program's staffing is consistent with its needs and resources? (See **OVERALL NEEDS**)

2 Yes No Does it ever happen that the program finds itself seriously short-handed? (See **STAFFING PLAN**)

3 Yes No Does the program have trouble recruiting good candidates for the role of instructor? (See **RECRUITING INSTRUCTORS**)

4 Yes No Do staff ever say, "I wish I knew that when I started"? (See **ORIENTATION**)

5 Yes No Are instructors well-prepared to teach literacy skills to the learners assigned to them (See **PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**)

6 Yes No Are instructors and other staff offered opportunities for continual in-service training that improves their effectiveness in working with the program's adult learners? (See **IN-SERVICE TRAINING**)

7 How does the program recruit volunteers? (See **RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS**)

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8 What special steps does the program take to recruit minority persons as instructors? (See **RACIAL/ ETHNIC COMPOSITION**)

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9 Describe the ways in which the quality of instructors' work is evaluated? (See **QUALITY ASSURANCE**)

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CHAPTER 4: INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT

Use Relevant, Learner-Focused Strategies and Materials

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS

- Learner-Focused Instruction
- Variety of Resources
- Experiential Focus
- Selection Criteria

ADULT LEARNER SUPPORT

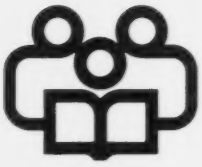
- Consistent Support
- Learner/Instructor Recognition

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Support Materials
- Instruction Effectiveness
- Curriculum Review
- Continual Striving

CHAPTER 4:
INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT

Use Relevant, Learner-Focused Strategies and Materials



INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS

LEARNER-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION **A literacy program should chose its instructional strategies and materials to help each adult learner progress towards his/her learning goals.**

Adults enter literacy programs because they want to experience literacy skills in their own world. Be sure learning materials relate to that world, both to maintain their interest and to enlarge on their experiences.

Select instructional strategies and materials that are consistent with the program's statement of mission and philosophy and its expected results.

VARIETY OF RESOURCES **A literacy program should consider the materials made available by different resources.**

National, statewide, and local literacy organizations and resource people can make information available about traditional and newly-developed instructional approaches and materials.

Many literacy program philosophies call for materials that are either adaptations of standard materials or tailor-made by the program's instructors to fit the interests of individual students.

EXPERIENTIAL FOCUS **A literacy program should use the learner's experiences for creating learning opportunities.**

Develop instructional strategies and materials that draw on the issues that the programs' learners face in their lives. For example, prepare reading lessons around the subjects of daycare, housing, neighborhood self-help, good food, kinds of work, electoral politics, and their children's education.

Another idea is to develop instructional strategies and materials on aspects of participating in a literacy program. Use materials from the community resource file, from the learners' own file, from the written plans and policies of the staff or Board, from literacy campaign materials, etc. for lessons.

SELECTION CRITERIA **The program's final choice of strategies and materials should be guided by the following:**

The results the program intends for its learners

Adult learners' needs, goals, experiences, and interests

Principles of adult learning

Adult learners' reading level

Instructors' teaching skills

How well the materials and their use encourage meaningful discussion

How well adult learners can determine their progress

Cultural-appropriateness and gender-fairness of materials

Cost

How well the learning setting (whether classroom, one to one, or small group) and the frequency and length of lessons fit the program's and learner's purposes and expectations.

ADULT LEARNER SUPPORT

CONSISTENT SUPPORT A literacy program should be built around the needs and interests of the adult learner.

As much as possible, design the structure and operations of the program to ensure the concerns of the program's learners are central.

A "job description" describing the learners' role helps them to define what is expected of them and their instructors. The written descriptions also can be the subject of learner lessons.

Build-in program mechanisms to encourage the participation of learners in all phases of program planning and operations, whenever possible.

Make sure there are opportunities for adult learners to interact with each other, as well as with instructors and managers.

Be alert to opportunities for program staff and instructors to support learners by making referrals, by representing them or accompanying them as advocates on relevant issues, and by extensions of friendship.

LEARNER/INSTRUCTOR RECOGNITION A literacy program should continually recognize the achievements of its adult learners.

The instructor should create an opportunity in every lesson and every progress check to acknowledge the learner's positive accomplishments.

Be aware of each instructor's accomplishments, and take every opportunity to acknowledge their commitment, good instruction, good rapport with learners, and good use of resources.

Give recognition to individual learners and instructors through vehicles such as a special column of the program newsletter, in a "learner of the month" and "instructor of the month" display on the bulletin board, and/or an annual dinner.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

SUPPORT MATERIALS A literacy program should acquire and use materials that support the instructor's work and the learner's progress.

Acquire and use manuals, teaching aids, and training experiences that supplement commercially available materials.

Maintain and make accessible a library of appropriate materials.

INSTRUCTION EFFECTIVENESS **A literary program should develop procedures to ensure instructors' effective use of teaching strategies and materials.**

Include an orientation and screening of instructional staff, written job descriptions, successful completion or pre-service training and attendance at relevant program meetings, and regular evaluation of instruction beginning with pre-service training performance.

Possible instructor evaluation criteria include: ability to motivate learners, ability to assist learners in making progress, development of instructional materials, contributions to teamwork, diligence and commitment, and others.

Other quality assurance procedures include case conferences among instructors, observation of instructors in action, and expert consultation called in from outside when an instructor and learner is "stuck."

CURRICULUM REVIEW **A literacy program should annually review its instructional strategies and materials.**

Examine whether the materials are adequate and appropriate for helping the program's learners attain their literacy goals.

Also examine whether each learner is getting a sufficient amount of instructional time, how well the instructional time is spent, how well each instructor organizes and presents a lesson, and how well the adult learners are progressing.

CONTINUAL STRIVING **A literacy program should constantly seek to improve the quality of instruction and support provided to its learners.**

Program participants (staff and learners) can visit other literacy programs, participate in in-service training and other educational opportunities, and keep up with current developments in the literacy field.

CHAPTER 4: INSTRUCTION

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Do the program's learners ever complain that they don't see the point of the materials being used? (See **LEARNER-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION**)

2 Yes No Is support of learners in reaching their literacy goals the primary focus of the program? (See **CONSISTENT SUPPORT**)

3 Yes No Do instructors in the program feel appreciated for their efforts? (See **LEARNER/ INSTRUCTOR RECOGNITION**)

4 Yes No Are instructors using the materials in the way that best supports learners' goals? (See **SUPPORT MATERIALS**)

5 Yes No Does the program review annually its instructional strategies and materials to be sure they are "doing the job?" (See **CURRICULUM REVIEW**)

6 What materials were considered by the program before making its choices? (See **VARIETY OF RESOURCES**)

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7 How does the program integrate the issues and experiences faced by the program's learners into its instructional approach? (See **EXPERIENTIAL FOCUS**)

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8 On what bases was the choice of strategies and materials made? (See **SELECTION CRITERIA**)

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9 What criteria are used to evaluate the quality of instruction? (See **INSTRUCTION EFFECTIVENESS**)

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10 How does the program keep up-to-date with promising developments in teaching literacy skills? (See **CONTINUAL STRIVING**)

CHAPTER 5: GOVERNANCE

Make the Program Accountable

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Board of Directors
- Advisory Committee
- Community Representation
- By-Laws and Policies
- Board Responsibilities
- Program Review Committee
- Board Orientation

LEGAL ISSUES

- Non-Profit Incorporation
- Tax-Exemption
- Legal Operations

PLANNING

- Long-Range Goals
- Annual Action Plan

ROLE OF ADULT LEARNERS AND STAFF

- Involvement

CHAPTER 5: GOVERNANCE

Make the Program Accountable

ACCOUNTABILITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **A free-standing literacy program should operate under the direction of a Board of Directors.**

The Board of Directors is a group that is legally, financially, and morally responsible for the operation and conduct of the literacy program. It ensures the program meets its purposes and is accountable to the community.

A literacy program that operates within a larger institution is ultimately responsible to the Board of Directors of the larger institution.

The Board of Directors may assign responsibility for the management of the program to staff, but is ultimately accountable for the program's management and effectiveness.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE **A literacy program that operates within a larger institution should establish an advisory committee to concern itself specifically with the development and performance of the literacy program.**

An advisory committee for a literacy component within a larger institution does not have legal responsibility for the program, but can help advocate the program and provide direction for it.

It could, for example, be a vehicle for raising community awareness, especially if it contained influential community residents. It could also help with fundraising, soliciting donated services from business, advocacy on legislative issues, and others.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION **The Board of Directors (or Advisory Committee) of a literacy program should reflect the different elements of the community on whom it depends for support.**

A literacy program depends on the community for its support.

Choose members of the Board of Directors based on their commitment to the purposes of the program, for the skills and resources they provide, and for their ability to reflect and represent the interests of the program's different bases of support (and potential support), including the learners themselves.

BY-LAWS AND POLICIES **A literacy program should operate under by-laws that define the number of Board Directors, their term of office, director and member eligibility rules, committee structure and functions, the operations of the Board, the relationships between Board and staff, and other items defined by state law.**

Those areas of policy not written into the by-laws should be written as policy statements, maintained in a "program operations handbook," and made a part of Board and staff orientation materials.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES **A literacy program's Board should direct its attention to a number of different areas of responsibility. These areas could be assigned to committees of the Board:**

Policy

Planning

Budget and Finance

Fund Raising

Personnel

Public Information

Program Evaluation

Board Development

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE **A literacy program should have a special committee to review and recommend changes in the way literacy skills are taught in the program.**

Possible committee composition includes Board members, the program's learners, staff, instructors, and interested others.

Possible committee focus areas include the way literacy skills are taught, the way learners and instructors are recruited, the choice of materials, the way that literacy problems are publicized, issues of learner support, etc.

BOARD ORIENTATION **New Board members should be oriented to the program by providing them a kit with all the basic documents of the program.**

Include in the kit articles of incorporation, statements of purpose, by-laws, program operations, handbook material on the learner population, community resource files, job descriptions, key meeting minutes, and other material requested by the Board.

LEGAL ISSUES

NON-PROFIT INCORPORATION **A free-standing literacy program should be incorporated according to its State's non- profit corporation statutes.**

Obtain guidance in drawing up proper Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws from your State Department of Administration or Attorney General. You can also get assistance from a local Non-Profit Management Assistance Center, if available.

TAX-EXEMPTION **A free-standing and non-profit literacy program should apply to the Federal Internal Revenue Service, and the appropriate State agency as well, for tax-exempt status.**

Tax-exempt status for the organization enables donors to claim their contributions as a tax deduction and is a motivator in persuading people/corporations to give.

Board/staff must familiarize themselves with the reporting requirements of the IRS.

LEGAL OPERATIONS **A literacy program's Board and staff director should become familiar with other Federal or State statutes or regulations that may apply, and must operate in compliance.**

Ensure your program is in compliance with the laws and regulations related to its different sources of funding; copyright, especially when reproducing copyrighted materials; sales tax, if the program sells goods as a money-making venture; solicitation of funds; and gambling, if it conducts raffles.

PLANNING

LONG-RANGE GOALS **The Board of a literacy program, with input from others, should establish long-range goals (three to five years) to guide the direction of the program.**

Relate long-range goals to the program's mission; progress toward the goals will indicate success with the mission.

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN **The staff of a literacy program should develop a one-year action plan, subject to approval by the Board, that specifies strategies for making progress on the long- range goals.**

Specify in the plan who will work on each strategy, and a timeline for completion, an itemized and justified budget, and procedures for monitoring the strategy's progress and evaluating its impact.

Update the action plan yearly to reflect changing conditions in the community and learner population, and the functioning of the program itself.

ROLE OF ADULT LEARNERS AND STAFF

INVOLVEMENT **A literacy program's adult learners and staff (both instructional and non-instructional) should have clearly-defined roles and share in the responsibility and authority for operating the program in ways that are consistent with the program's mission, philosophy, and expected results.**

Programs differ in how much they intend to follow the traditional "top-down" form of management, or how much they intend to empower adult learners to share in the governance of the program.

Adult learners can share in program governance by serving on the Board or advisory committee, recruiting other adult learners, evaluating instructional strategies and materials, aiding in staff orientation and pre-service training, or developing program goals and action plans, etc.

Staff can participate in program governance by participating in the work of Board committees, taking responsibility for implementing policy, and representing the concerns of learners to other staff and Board Directors.

CHAPTER 5: GOVERNANCE

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Is there a Board of Directors and does it obviously take legal, financial, and moral responsibility for the program? (See **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**)

2 Yes No Is there an advisory committee and does it help advocate the program and provide direction for it? (See **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**)

3 Yes No Does the composition of the board reflect the key segments of the community needed to show community support? (See **COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION**)

4 Yes No Are program participants ever confused about the policies of the program (See **BY-LAWS AND POLICIES**)

5 Yes No Does the Board give active attention to all the necessary areas of its responsibility? (See **BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**)

6 Yes No Is anyone or a group responsible for reviewing the program and recommending changes? (See **PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE**)

7 Yes No Are new Board members oriented to the program with a kit of all its basic documents? (See **BOARD ORIENTATION**)

8 Yes No Is the program legally incorporated as a non-profit corporation (See **NON-PROFIT INCORPORATION**)

9 Yes No Has the program been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service? (See **TAX-EXEMPTION**)

10 Yes No Are there any areas of the program's operation for which a lawyer's advice should be sought? (See **LEGAL OPERATIONS**)

11 Yes No Does the program have an annual action plan that outlines what the program's workers should be doing? (See **ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**)

12 What are the program's long-range goals? (See **LONG-RANGE GOALS**)

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13 In what ways do adult learners and staff share in the authority and responsibility for operating the program (See **INVOLVEMENT**)

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CHAPTER 6: MANAGEMENT

Run the Program Well, and Consistently

STAFF MANAGEMENT

- Personnel Practices
- Volunteerism
- Burnout Prevention
- Internal Coordination
- Feelings of Ownership

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Sound Practices
- Fundraising
- Consistency

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

- Location
- Maintenance

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- Recordkeeping
- Learner Records
- Instructor Records
- Program Performance Data
- Program Profile Data

REPORTING

- Timely Reports
- Annual Report

CHAPTER 6: MANAGEMENT

Run the Program Well, and Consistently

STAFF MANAGEMENT

PERSONNEL PRACTICES A literacy program should have clear expectations of its workers, both paid and volunteer, consistent with its statements of purpose and by-laws.

Write policies and procedures to address issues of compensation, supervision, evaluation, grievances, and advancement.

Be sure policies reflect the different types of workers' relationship to the program, whether paid, volunteer, stipended, temporary, or part-time.

Quality, dedicated effort should be expected of all staff, whether paid or volunteer.

VOLUNTEERISM A literacy program should consider ways to extend its impact by building in ways for volunteers to participate in the program.

Volunteers can participate in instructional roles, as instructors or as instructional aides, or work in other learner support roles, such as linking learners to other community resources.

Volunteers can design and deliver public information on the program or on literacy, recruit adult learners, and network with other organizations.

Volunteers can also provide office support and program management.

BURNOUT PREVENTION A literacy program should continually reward the contributions of both paid and volunteer resources.

Since people seldom work with literacy programs for the financial rewards, rewards must come in other ways.

Structure your program so that paid and volunteer staff can readily obtain other strong rewards: a sense of achievement, recognition for work well done, the nature and importance of the work itself, responsibility, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Ensure all rewards are both genuine and appropriate, and not inconsistent or counterproductive.

INTERNAL COORDINATION A literacy program should use the Board-approved annual action plan in planning and coordinating its activities.

Once the plan is approved, make implementing the plan the major focus of regular staff discussion and action.

Schedule regular meetings for those responsible for different functions of the plan to coordinate all program phases.

FEELINGS OF OWNERSHIP **A literacy program should encourage the kind of communication among participants than engenders feelings of "ownership" of the program and its outcomes.**

Feelings of ownership keep commitment and productivity high. Feelings of ownership are enhanced when participants are included in decisions that affect them, when a feeling of quality prevails, when people get what they need, and when the purposes of the program are fulfilled.

"Participants" include adult learners, paid and volunteer staff, and the Board of Directors.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SOUND PRACTICES **A literacy program should practice principles of sound financial management in its budgeting, fundraising, expenditures, bookkeeping, and reporting.**

Keep accurate financial records from the very start of the program. Good financial management demonstrates the program is responsible. It is also an area in which the program is legally accountable.

Consider asking a local business to donate the services of a Certified Public Accountant for advice on bookkeeping, financial management, and preparation for audit.

Professional accounting societies sometimes provide low-cost or donated professional advice and services, as well.

FUNDRAISING **A literacy program should maintain an adequate and diversified financial support base.**

Base proposal writing and fund development directly on the program's long-range goals and annual action plan.

While some programs are adequately support by a single contract or grant, diversity is recommended as protection against cutbacks.

Ensure the Board and staff director are knowledgeable of different public and private sources of financial support, of grantwriting and fundraising strategies.

Funding sources include: private foundations and corporations; federal, state and local government; federated giving programs, such as United Ways or The Other Ways; individuals, through one-time donations or membership programs; charging fees for services unrelated to the primary instruction mission, such as training workshops; and special sales or events.

Seek donated services and materials from the business community to supplement cash income.

CONSISTENCY **A literacy program should seek funds and funding sources that are consistent with the program's mission and long-range goals.**

Funders may place certain restrictions, either stated or implied, on the use of the funds that could seriously alter the nature of the program.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

LOCATION **A literacy program should operate from an identifiable and accessible location.**

Maintain an office or storefront with a listed telephone number answered at regular, publicized hours.

MAINTENANCE **A literacy program should have an attractive, comfortable, and adequately-equipped facility for its instructional program.**

Clearly identify the responsibility for maintaining the facility and its supplies.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

RECORDKEEPING **A literacy program should determine its recordkeeping needs, so that it can monitor its progress, and so that it can be responsive to requests for information.**

Anticipate the type of requests for information you will receive, and plan recordkeeping accordingly.

The program's statements of purpose, long-range goals, and annual action plan are good sources of ideas about the type of records to keep.

The Board of Directors and the program's funding sources will also have information requirements.

Design recordkeeping forms and practices so confidentiality of learner and/or instructor data can be maintained.

LEARNER RECORDS **A literacy program should have a system for recording, updating, and compiling information on its adult learners.**

Systematically record, update, and compile the data recommended in Appendix A on adult learners.

These data are helpful for monitoring the makeup of the program's population, for matching individual characteristics with appropriate tutors, and for making periodic summary reports of program results.

INSTRUCTOR RECORDS **A literacy program should have a system for recording, updating, and compiling information on its instructors.**

Record the data recommended in Appendix A for instructors, whether paid or volunteer.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA **A literacy program should have a system for compiling summary data that reveals its level of activity and performance.**

Compile at least annually the summary data recommended in Appendix A.

PROGRAM PROFILE DATA **A literacy program should have on file some basic descriptive facts about the program.**

Keep on file basic program profile data recommended in Appendix A.

REPORTING

TIMELY REPORTS **A literacy program should submit its required reports on time, and in the required format.**

It is easier to gain and keep the support of program constituents when it demonstrates and models responsibility.

ANNUAL REPORT **A literacy program should make an annual report to its Board of Directors or advisory committee, participants, funding sources, and the community at large.**

Include in the annual report financial statements, compilations of adult learner data, instructor data, program performance data, program profile data, an assessment of the program's accomplishments for the past year or longer, success stories, an updated assessment of literacy problems in the community, and a statement of future goals.

CHAPTER 6: MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Do staff ever complain of unfair working conditions? (See **PERSONNEL PRACTICES**)

2 Yes No Do program workers ever complain that they don't get enough positive rewards from their work? (See **BURNOUT PREVENTION**)

3 Yes No Once the annual action plan is written and approved, is it used? (See **INTERNAL COORDINATION**)

4 Yes No Are there ways that internal communication can be improved? (See **FEELINGS OF OWNERSHIP**)

5 Yes No Are the financial records sufficiently complete to sustain an audit? (See **SOUND PRACTICES**)

6 Yes No Has the program ever had to change its operations to suit the demands of a funder? (See **CONSISTENCY**)

7 Yes No Does the program maintain an office or storefront with a listed telephone number that is answered at regular, publicized hours? (See **LOCATION**)

8 Yes No Could the program be losing learners because the facility is unattractive, uncomfortable, or poorly equipped? (See **MAINTENANCE**)

9 Yes No Can the program answer the question, "How many adult learners completed 50 hours of instruction this year and significantly improved their ability to read?" (See **LEARNER RECORDS**)

10 Yes No Can the program answer the question, "How many volunteers are sufficiently trained and available next month for instruction in the evenings?" (See **INSTRUCTOR RECORDS**)

11 Yes No Does the program have a procedure for summarizing its activity and performance during the year? (See **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA**)

12 Yes No Does the program have a brochure giving all the program profile data recommended in Appendix A? (See **PROGRAM PROFILE DATA**)

13 Yes No Has the program submitted its required reports late during the last two years? (See **TIMELY REPORTS**)

14 In what ways can volunteers participate in the program, and what do they get out of it? (See **VOLUNTEERISM**)

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15 What would happen if the program's major source of financial support were cut in half? (See **FUNDRAISING**)

_____

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_____

16 What are the major questions asked about the program's effectiveness, and what would reasonable answers look like? (See **RECORDKEEPING**)

17 What kinds of information are included in the program's annual report? (See **ANNUAL REPORT**)

CHAPTER 7: EVALUATION

Discover How Well the Program Works

EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' PROGRESS

- Regular Evaluation
- Learner Progress

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

- Annual Review
- Flexible Design
- Program Improvement
- New Frontiers

CHAPTER 7: EVALUATION

Discover How Well the Program Works

EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' PROGRESS

REGULAR EVALUATION **A literacy program should annually assess to what extent its adult learners are experiencing the intended results.**

The bases for this annual assessment include the assessments done on learners when they began the program, the subsequent assessments made on them during the program or upon leaving the program, and any follow-up assessments made since they left the program.

Make every effort to keep your assessments of learner progress current, so they can be used to compile the annual evaluation of learners' progress.

For some assessment areas, you may need to conduct follow-up calls or visits to individual learners, to discover how they are progressing toward their goals.

LEARNER PROGRESS **A literacy program should annually compile results for its learners in each of the assessment areas included in the program's statement of expected learner results. The program should attempt to answer the following questions:**

PERSONAL LITERACY GOAL ATTAINMENT: To what extent do the program's adult learners achieve the personal goals with which they came into the program?

READING COMPREHENSION: To what extent do the program's adult learners learn the skills of reading?

SELF-CONFIDENCE: To what extent do the program's adult learners feel more self-confident as a result of developing their literacy skills?

ECONOMIC/EMPLOYMENT STATUS: To what extent have the program's adult learners improved their employment/economic status as a result of developing their literacy skills, or to what extent have they improved their employability by going on to other learning programs?

LIFELONG LEARNING/EMPOWERMENT: To what extent do the program's adult learners use their literacy skills to become more self-reliant and to enjoy learning?

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

ANNUAL REVIEW **A literacy program should undertake an annual review of its operations to determine the degree to which its mission and goals are reflected in the program's activities and results.**

Begin the review just prior to developing the next year's action plan.

Complete the review under the direction of the Board of Directors or an advisory committee. The Board, an external person, or group hired for the purpose can do the review.

Include in the review the consultation of the program's adult learners, instructors, other staff, Board members, and key community constituents.

Focus the review on all categories of program activity: community assessment, coordination and networking, public awareness, adult learner recruitment, student assessment, instruction, training, referral, staff performance, student support, governance, management, and how well learners are progressing.

Use the different sections within each chapter of these Guidelines as a checklist of things to consider in the annual review.

FLEXIBLE DESIGN **A literacy program should use a flexible approach to evaluation, choosing those strategies that are consistent with its mission, philosophy, and expected results of the program.**

Before starting the annual review, plan it carefully. Determine just what questions you would like answered; how thorough the answers should be; who should participate in the evaluation; how much of it should be written into a report; and exactly what tasks are required.

A well-planned approach to evaluation will develop evidence and summaries that produce an intelligible, interesting, and useful picture of the program.

There is no "one best way" to evaluate a program, so use a flexible approach to evaluation that will give the kind of information you need to improve the program and to present its accomplishments persuasively.

Value the unanticipated results as well as the expected results of the program.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT **A literacy program should assertively address any areas that need fixing or updating, as revealed in the program evaluation.**

Responding quickly to opportunities to improve the program demonstrates good management to program supporters.

NEW FRONTIERS **A literacy program should explore and include in its management different approaches to learner and program evaluation.**

Evaluation procedures to assess adult learner progress are currently being developed and improved upon. Be alert to these efforts and begin to incorporate them into program procedures.

CHAPTER 7: EVALUATION

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1 Yes No Does the program conduct an annual review to discover to what extent its adult learners are experiencing the intended results? (See **REGULAR EVALUATION**)

2 Yes No Is the program taking steps to integrate evaluation practices into its operations so that it can continue to make improvements? (See **NEW FRONTIERS**)

3 For which of the five types of "expected learner results" can the program compile actual results on its learners? (See **LEARNER PROGRESS**)

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4 In what ways can these Guidelines be used by the program to conduct an annual review of the program's operations? (See **ANNUAL REVIEW**)

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5 What are the different questions you would want an annual review to address? (See **FLEXIBLE DESIGN**)

_____

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6 What did the last review of program operations reveal in terms of opportunities for improvement? (See **PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**)

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APPENDIX A: PROGRAM RECORDS

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

- The Program's Adult Learners
- Adult Learner Assessments
- The Services Provided to the Learner
- The Program's Instructors

PERFORMANCE DATA

- Pre-Service Training
- Staffing
- Adult Learning

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

- Program Profile

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM RECORDS

A literacy program should keep records in each of the major areas outlined below. There are different ways of recording the individual items of information, and there is no standardization in the literacy field as yet.

Individual programs should seek guidance in setting up their recordkeeping systems from their state or national literacy organizations. Funders may also have recordkeeping systems or suggestions or requirements.

Recordkeeping is also discussed in the body of these Guidelines. See Chapter 6: Management, for a discussion of financial records; and Chapter 7: Evaluation, for a discussion of how records can be used.

The starred (*) items are those that could be considered important enough to be included in summary form in a national computerized directory or database of adult literacy programs.

DESCRIPTIVE DATA: THE PROGRAM'S ADULT LEARNERS

Name
Address
* Sex
* Race/ethnic group
* Native country
* Age group
Marital status
* Urban, rural, or suburban residence
Number of children at home
* Education background (highest level completed)
Other literacy programs attended (plus length of time, reasons for leaving)
Present reading ability
Physical/mental conditions which would affect learning
Last eye exam
Last ear exam
Job skills
* Employment status
Where employed, percent of time
Usual mode of transportation
Childcare needed
* Income group (optional for person to answer)
* Public assistance status (optional for person to answer)

DESCRIPTIVE DATA: ADULT LEARNER ASSESSMENTS

Learner's goal for literacy
Learner's goals for participating in the program
Learner's participation in other programs (Adult Basic Education, CETA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education)
* Tests and assessment methods used
Assessment of learner's reading skills
Test results (which test, at what intervals, scores (raw scores and normed scores))
Reasons for leaving the program
Assessment of learner results
Areas of learner improvement

DESCRIPTIVE DATA: THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE LEARNER

Contact date
* Site location (type)
Learner's availability for lessons (time, place)
How learner learned of project
Date started instruction
* Which program (ESL, literacy)
Which instructor
Instruction schedule
Instructors
Date lessons began
* No. contact or instructional hours
No. program hours
Date lessons finished
* Type of instruction
Support services received (counseling, referrals)

DESCRIPTIVE DATA: THE PROGRAM'S INSTRUCTORS

Name
* Program (Literacy, ESL)
* Sex
* Age
* Race/ethnic group
Address/phone
* Occupation
Employer
Work address/phone
* Education
Teaching or tutoring experience (when? how long?)
Volunteer experience
Times available for instruction (days x times)
How long will you be able to instruct
Learner preferences (age range, sex)
How instructor heard about program
Reason for wanting to be volunteer
Dates and types of training sessions
* No. instructors paid/volunteer

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA: PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

* No. workshops in literacy instruction
* No. persons participating in literacy workshops
* No. other workshops
* No. ESL workshops
* No. persons trained

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA: STAFFING

* No. hours worked
* No. hours in travel
* No. hours in prep
No. instructors available now for assignment
No. instructors who wish to be contacted later for assignment

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA: ADULT LEARNING

- No. learners in program for 50 hours
- No. learners enrolling in level
- No. terminations, plus reasons
- No. learners waiting for instruction
- No. improving their reading comprehension
- No. meeting their personal literacy goals by type of goal
- No. going on to other educational resources
- No. improving employment or employability

DESCRIPTIVE DATA: PROGRAM PROFILE

- Name of program
- Area served
- Director's name, address, phone number
- Program locations
- Addresses and phone numbers of contact persons at each location
- Program mission
- Program philosophy (what the program is)
- Adult learner populations
  History of the program
- Types of instruction and materials used
- How the program uses volunteers
- How the program works with adult learners
- Current funding levels and types of sources
- No. adult learners
- No. instructors
- No. volunteers involved with instruction
  Relation of literacy program to larger organization (if applicable)
  Program long-range goals

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

ADULT LITERACY

NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION

VOLUNTEERISM

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

ADULT LITERACY

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